

VZCZCXYZ0025
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHNT #1173/01 2881213
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 141213Z OCT 08
FM AMEMBASSY TASHKENT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0405
INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE
RUEHAH/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT 4393
RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ASTANA 0609
RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK 5010
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 0868
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 0607
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE 0889
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 4604
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 2895
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 0907
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 7624
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1554
RUEHUM/AMEMBASSY ULAANBAATAR 0223
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC 0454
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2842
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC 0305
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0392
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 2061
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1509
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL 0033

C O N F I D E N T I A L TASHKENT 001173

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/14/2018
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [MCAP](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [UZ](#)
SUBJECT: UZBEKISTAN: RED CROSS CAUTIOUSLY EXPLORING
ASSISTANCE TO SECURITY FORCES

Classified By: Poloff Steven Prohaska for reasons 1.4 (b, d).

11. (C) Summary: On September 30, Poloff and Deskoff met with International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) representative Simon Yule, who discussed ICRC plans to provide assistance to the Government of Uzbekistan's (GOU) security forces. Yule believes that this engagement may reduce the risk of lethal exchanges during periods of civil unrest by providing the Government of Uzbekistan with better "graduated response" capabilities. Some preliminary discussions between the ICRC and the GOU are underway, but progress is likely to be slow given that this is a new area for the organization and because of the GOU's inefficient bureaucracy. End summary.

Targeting the MVD

12. (C) On September 30, Poloff and Deskoff met with International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Police and Security Forces Delegate Simon Yule at the ICRC's Tashkent office. Yule indicated that the ICRC is examining how to provide assistance to Uzbekistan's security forces--particularly for the Internal Troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD)--and that such assistance may provide Uzbekistan with a larger range of options in response to potential outbreaks of civil unrest.

The Role of the Internal Troops

13. (C) Yule said that the ICRC has recently conducted research to improve its awareness of the role that the Internal Troops play in Uzbekistan. The Internal Troops are an element of the MVD structured along military lines, and have responsibilities that include maintaining internal

security, participating in crowd control efforts, guarding prisons, and providing border security support. In the event of civil disturbances, ordinary MVD police would be the first to respond. Internal Troops would be brought in if ordinary police proved unable to contain a situation, but the threshold for this is unclear. Internal Troops are trained for law enforcement, but have a combat role as well.

Possible Training Events

¶4. (C) The ICRC could provide classroom instruction to the MVD and could serve as a consultant during MVD field exercises, Yule continued. Other training may include roundtable sessions that offer case studies of how other countries respond to civil unrest. The Red Cross is trying to avoid any training that teaches specific tactics, however. Moreover, it hopes to convey to the Government of Uzbekistan that a security forces unit should not have both law enforcement and combat responsibilities, as a different mindset is necessary for each of these functions. The ICRC is carefully considering how to proceed with this assistance, and discussions with Red Cross management and Geneva are ongoing.

Poor Equipment Could Raise the Risk of Bloodshed

¶5. (C) Yule noted that further engagement with the Government of Uzbekistan (GOU) will show the ICRC what kind of equipment the MVD has. Yule warned that not having the appropriate equipment results in a greater risk of disproportionately violent responses from authorities. For example, if an MVD officer lacks adequate protective equipment, he will be more likely to pull the trigger to minimize the risk to his own life during a violent exchange. The ICRC is now looking for equipment donors.

Preliminary Discussions Underway, But Obstacles Remain

¶6. (C) The ICRC's first round of meetings with the MVD on possible security cooperation took place on July 3. Yule complained that those in the MVD are not the real decisionmakers; the security services and Presidential Apparatus will make the decisions on cooperation. Yule noted that he is preparing for another round of meetings with more senior officials instead, and hoped to receive some indications of commitment from the GOU.

¶7. (C) Uzbekistan has the means to cooperate, but whether it has the political will is a different story, he continued. Uzbekistan is saying the right things, but its sincerity is an open question. Yule said his task is complicated by the fact that so many of Uzbekistan's ministries have their own security units and there is significant duplication of effort among these. Furthermore, obtaining information on these and their respective responsibilities has been challenging.

Comment:

¶8. (C) Simon's point that engagement with the security forces in Uzbekistan may in fact reduce the risk of lethal exchanges between authorities and the populace is particularly interesting. Cooperation so far appears to have been limited to talks between the organization and the GOU. Further progress on crowd control assistance is likely to proceed very slowly given that this is a relatively new area for the Red Cross--which is also probably anxious to avoid possible future accusations that ICRC training resulted in casualties during clashes--and given Uzbekistan's often inefficient and suspicious bureaucracy. It is also possible that the ICRC prison visits negotiations, which have stalled, are contributing to the slow development of cooperation in this sector. Buy-in from more senior levels of the government will be necessary before significant cooperation in this

sphere can take place.
NORLAND